

# **REMARKS FOR ADMINISTRATOR BOLDEN**

## **NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION**

### **MEMORIAL DAY EVENT**

**May 26, 2011**

Thank you, Annette (Taylor), for inviting me. It's always a pleasure to be with my colleagues at the National Science Foundation.

NASA and NSF have a long history of collaboration both at the human and the cosmic level. We have a history of collaboration from the GLOBE program that helps students around the world become Earth scientists to other activities to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and create the next generation of exploration leaders. Our partnership now extends to programs modeling space weather and helping us learn more about our home planet –at least for my two cents worth – the most important planet around!

NASA and NSF continue to explore partnership opportunities, and our work together will be making history long into the future.

Memorial Day is a special day for all of us who have served in the military. Career military service has been the firm foundation of my blessed life, and I am grateful for my 34 years of experience as a U.S. Marine that gave me opportunities to serve my nation in many capacities.

When I was flying combat missions over Vietnam, there were times when I didn't think I'd come back – five of my squadron mates did not. That's just one of many reasons that military service is like no other career in the world. You entrust your life to the integrity and skill of your colleagues. Those who lose their lives affect you deeply because all of you were pursuing the same cause and going through extreme challenges together. The triumphs and the losses are both very big.

Both NASA and the NSF have long relied on the varied expertise of men and women from all branches of the service. I know NSF recently lost William Colston, NSF engineer and U. S. Coast Guard Academy graduate, and we honor his service and his contribution to our nation's future through his NSF and his military work. Today is an opportunity for us to pay tribute to him and many other military personnel who have contributed their

knowledge and passion and military can-do attitude to our respective organizations.

Right now, orbiting above us as the Space Shuttle Endeavour is docked to the International Space Station, are 9 men, 4 of whom are active or retired U.S. military and there's another U.S. Air Force officer joining them on the next Soyuz launch June 7.

On Memorial Day we remember those we've loved and with whom we have served. We also look to the future – to the ways we can honor their legacies – to the ways they have given us strength and ties that help propel us into that future even as we cherish their memories.

NASA is in the future business. For more than 50 years, we've helped to bring things into reality that were just dreams. Ours is a dangerous business, exploring space. It always has been and always will be.

Each time men and women board a spacecraft, their actions carry great risk along with the opportunity for great discoveries and the chance to push the envelope of our human achievement. We will always honor the Apollo

1, STS-51L - Challenger, and STS-107 - Columbia crews, as well as other members of the NASA family who lost their lives supporting NASA's mission of exploration. We thank them and their families for their extraordinary sacrifices in the service of our nation.

As I said, the Marine Corps was my life for 34 years. It will always be a part of me. Along the way I served with and commanded many fine Marines and sailors, some of whom lost their lives serving this nation. I remember them all and ask that you remember and honor them on this occasion of Memorial Day.

I joined the military to follow in the footsteps of my father and uncles, who had served in World War II, and to be part of something larger – to do something for my country and be involved on a national scale.

While the Memorial Day parades go by, it's my honor to have served with so many fine men and women, who took their military training and applied it to NSF and NASA to help create a future that was not only free, but expanded horizons for people across the globe.

I'm proud to be carrying on that legacy right now. Just yesterday, NASA announced a new planetary mission to return a sample from an asteroid. We also made some decisions this week about the next crew capsule that could take humans to an asteroid in the future. We're launching a mission to Jupiter in August and the next rover to Mars in November. We call it *Curiosity*, and at the size of a small car, it will have the most sophisticated suite of science instruments ever sent to the Red Planet. We memorialize our little trooper *Spirit*, the Mars Rover that we have just now ceased attempting to contact after an extraordinary six-year mission.

To friends and family of service members lost in combat, my hat is off to you. To those of you still serving, I know you carry with you the same large debt I do to our colleagues who have made the ultimate sacrifice and enriched our lives through their work.

I don't say anything new when I say that the nation owes all of you our deepest gratitude. Our highest honor – I think the highest compliment we can pay those who have died for their country is to take action today to keep unfolding the future for which they fought and died.

It's my honor as the head of NASA to help our nation maintain its leadership in space and to push the limits of human experience. To find out more about our planet and its processes and changes to help keep us all safe in the most basic sense, by predicting extreme weather or showing where imbalances are occurring in the climate system, or helping nations recover from natural disaster. And as we do that, we also set our sights on other solar systems, other galaxies – keys to the very origins of our universe. So much knowledge is within our grasp right now that even a few years ago seemed like so much science fiction.

And it's that kind of big picture that those who were willing to lay down their lives for our country must have in mind as they do the dangerous and challenging things that their duty requires. National service is about serving that ideal of our nation -- that we do big things – things that benefit the whole world. In that light, we remember our fellows this Memorial Day who made the ultimate sacrifice.

It's great to be among both NSF and military friends today. May God bless our fallen comrades and the United States of America and the bright future toward which we are all working.

